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By-Martin, John Henry
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Recommended are a series of educational changes which would enhance the schooling of poor children in slum schools. (1) The most important factor requiring change is teacher expectation of slum children. (2) Primary school levels should be upgraded. (3) Specialists should be grouped into a diagnostic treatment team led by a reading specialist who is responsible for the classes of 10 to 15 teachers. Classroom teacher and specialist would cooperate to plan an individualized program for each child. (4) Educational supervision must shift from managerial functions to ones concerned with instructional process. (5) All junior and senior high school students of all income levels should have part-time jobs with exposure to a wide range of human services occupations. (6) Vocational education must be restructured so that youth are first employed and then educated in conjunction with the job. (NH)

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A MODEL PROGRAM FOR EDUCATIONALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN

by JOHN HENRY MARTIN*

In schools largely attended by children of middle-income families, the standard American reading program for first graders produces 25 percent rejects. In the Harlems and South Side Chicagos of the nation, the failure rate for first graders is 75 to 85 percent.

Not only is there a greater difference in the first grade, but the longer the low-income children stay in school, the greater becomes the gap between their achievement and that of middle-class children.

This paper attempts to discuss what implications this fact has for the development of a model program for educationally deprived children.

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Environmental Effects:

Slums and poverty are enervating, damaging, abusive, denigrating and suppress the intellectual lives of children. They literally murder babies. For every white, middle-class infant that dies before reaching the age of two, there are two children of poverty that join him.

For those children who survive, things are bleak—physically, mentally and intellectually.

Popular myth has it that Negro children are physically well off. In reality, the development of physical dexterity skills in low-income Negro children is retarded, vastly in excess of that of white children in the same school.

Mental retardation is higher, too. It is now known that a good deal of mental retardation is caused by environmental circumstances. Children of poverty generally come from mothers who are dietetically and environmentally poor. Consequently, their children are damaged at birth more frequently than is generally true for the rest of society.

**Dr. Martin is Senior Vice President of Responsive Environment Corporation and former Special Assistant to the Director of the United States Office of Economic Opportunity. The well known author, educator and lecturer has served as Superintendent of Schools in Freeport and Mount Vernon, New York, and in Wayne, New Jersey. He was a consultant to the Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder, State of New Jersey.*

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Low-income children grow up in an environment that tends to be noisy, but essentially speechless. By the age of three, most children are speaking rather well. However, by the age of five, there is a wide difference in the vocabulary and complexity of speech of children of poverty and their middle-income counterparts.

Nothing that we have done since the day we were born is anywhere near as intellectually complicated as learning to speak. Reading is further down the intellectual scale of difficulty than speaking, but in our public schools we have children who, by the age of eight, have failed to learn to read three times. The stupidity and inadequacy of the processes that keep an eight-year-old from learning a simpler task than he began to learn at 18 months of age are appalling.

Limitation of the Parental Role:

Another serious problem has been the absence of a parental urge in things involving the intellect. This is not to say that the poor don't love their children or want them to succeed. What it does mean is that middle-class parents use a series of parental approvals, sanctions, withholdings of affection, denials of affirmation and grantings of support in the child's intellectual development. This role of the mother and father has been almost non-existent in the poverty home.

The middle-class home historically has been full of a competitive urge geared to the larger world. This enhances and develops a child. It is even more important than the toys, books, instruments, magazines and papers which are also often absent in the homes of the poor.

Role of the Civil Rights Movement:

Negro militancy and the drive for equal rights have done more for public education in the United States than anything else in the past 40 years.

The civil rights movement, with its many consequences and accomplishments, has included a revolution that has been largely unseen, except by those in leadership roles in public schools. During the last five years in particular, there has been a revolution in the mother's expressed concern for her children.

This concern for the education of the child of poverty, particularly the Negro child of poverty, represents a tremendous revolution in terms of removing apathy and the assumption that the school was the white man's school. What happened there had to be damaging, and there was no way to change it. This attitude has existed for at least the last two generations in the urban Negro community in the North and universally in the South.

But it's obvious that the civil rights revolution has caused a militancy that is producing a determination in the mother-child relationship that the child shall be taught. This determination, which, in general, was

previously so foreign to the mother of the child in poverty, may be the single most important aspect of the civil rights struggle as far as school people are concerned.

Basically, we have succeeded in teaching those school children whose parents taught them that it was important to learn. However, the schools have failed to teach those large numbers of children from homes where there was ignorance of what went on in school, or hostility, or indifference. We have failed because we have not developed techniques of instruction that can teach the "unmotivated" child.

Obviously, we need to work hard at institutional forms of behavior that are going to bring low-income parents into the schools, a la I.S. 201 in New York.

It's strange, but in the schools of Manhasset, Long Island, which are among the richest in the country, there are parents in the classrooms, in the halls, in the libraries. The administration and faculty never resent it because they don't dare resent it. Boards of Education in suburbia have been involving parents and community leaders in the selection of principals for a generation and now, because the black people in the slums want to do the same, it's called a revolution.

Like it or not, the people of the slums, the people in poverty, care about their children, and are showing it. Unless the schools are changed, it will be demonstrated in every city in the United States that we don't really know how to educate children.

The Effects of Failure:

Today our schools do succeed in teaching a number of things extremely well. They teach a child what to think of himself. He isn't born with this; he learns it. He learns that he's able, he can, he wants to learn and he learns to take pleasure in learning. Or, the child who fails in first grade at age six learns that he doesn't belong. He can't, he's unable, he's never going to learn. He learns he's a dope.

So great is the passion within a child's soul that he must succeed in something. So, some children succeed in other kinds of worlds, in other kinds of places. They become leaders in the streets—brutally successful in their asphalt society, moving toward some degree of effectiveness, somewhere, somehow.

This is the problem, an unsolved and, basically, unattacked problem. Where do we go from here? How do we model the kinds of changes needed in our schools?

Change? How?

A host of things have been begun in the schools. Most of them are packaged in the generic term "Head Start" or the program called "Follow Through." Follow Through is an effort to elevate the kinds of practices

and institutional behavior that were developed in Head Start to make them begin to have an impact on the primary grades in elementary schools, such as:

1. small classes;
2. using large numbers of non-professional teacher aides;
3. employing technology;
4. new recognition of the role of medicine in education;
5. a new role for the psychologist and psychological attention generally, and;
6. recognition of the importance of nutrition in the lives of children.

This last is crucial; if schools don't feed them, the bulk of the children of the poor will not get a decent meal from any other source, so nutrition has come to play an important role in education.

To change the schools, the CAP agencies, the community, the Boards of Education, the superintendents of schools and the assistants who work with such groups must work together as a model. After all, the function of Title I money, the function of the school people, the function of involving the poor is to enhance education.

Now, if we're going to change the schools, what kinds of things should be done?

Teacher Expectation:

Teacher expectation is the single, most important dynamic factor in bringing about change. Dr. Kenneth Clark says that the most miserable and inadequate thing in the public schools in the slums is the attitude of the teacher. Children do what is expected of them, what is created in the atmosphere of the classroom.

One proof of the importance and influence of teacher attitude was pointed out in a rating situation in which the children were given six-digit numbers instead of names and all of the material they produced had their code names on it. Teachers were given that material to grade and later the names were added. The teachers expressed universal surprise at the contradiction between the graded sheet and their own expectation of what the child could do.

So, the first recommendation for change is a change in the attitude of the teacher of slum children.

Ungraded Education:

Second, I would ungrade the primary and mix the ages of the children in our schools. The grade system is a bankruptcy which denies everything we know about children and how they learn.

The grading system doesn't allow for individual differences even within a grade. For example, when a November 1 cut-off date is set, the child who will be five on November 2 must wait another year before entering

school. He is, by then, 364 days, or about 20% older, than his youngest classmate. In a typical kindergarten there may be as much as an 18-inch difference in height and children may weigh anywhere from 27 to 60 pounds. But the school systems regard all kindergartens the same.

Individualized instruction has been discussed for 30 years. Across the face of the United States, test results and pupil records show that the differences in reading ability in the third grade cover at least four years, and usually as wide a range as six to eight years, yet the materials given to the teacher have a one-year range only.

One of the most important truths discovered is that if you take 14-year-olds and make them tutors to six-year-olds, something good happens to the six-year-olds, but something phenomenal happens to the 14-year-olds. There is something about the tutorial process that does magnificent things for the tutor.

Function of the Specialists:

Third, I would change the method of operation of the school's specialists. Take the reading specialists, speech therapists, school nurses, medical personnel, psychologists and other consultants away from the isolation of their individual specialty and make them into a diagnostic treatment team.

Take a *true* reading specialist and make him chairman of that team responsible for a relatively small number (10 to 15) teachers. That specialist will review the individual file folders on every child in every one of the classes that he is responsible for. The specialist and the classroom teacher together will develop and plan a variation on instructional methods, instructional materials and the nature of the school day.

If such sessions produce no improvement, there will be a number of other specialists to see if there is another reason for the child's difficulties. We've called this the referral system. The diagnostic team would focus the whole intensity of the educational institution on a child's progress, taking one child at a time.

Education Supervision:

Fourth, we need to convert to a supervisory system in education. We have not had supervision; we have super-production managers called superintendents and plant managers called principals. They do not observe a piece of the instruction process as it relates to a child, and then sit with the teacher to diagnose and change the methods used by that teacher.

Student Employment:

Fifth, as a part of the educational system, all junior and senior high school youngsters of all income groups should have part-time jobs. Make

them part-time firemen, letter carriers, clerks, police cadets, tutors, family aides, welfare aides, classroom teacher aides; move them through a sequence of these jobs for a period of two or three years, letting them find and stay longest on the job they do and like best. On the high school level, the kids who need it could be paid. Start them at, say, 70 cents an hour, half the minimum wages, then raise their wages as they produce.

Remember, as industrial labor declines in the United States, more technology will bring about a need for more human services. Part-time work in this whole range of governmental and human services mobilizing the tremendous talent and drive of early adolescence into this kind of service is magnificent education that we have not tapped.

Restructure Vocational Education:

Sixth, vocational education should be restructured. Vocational education is a good idea, but, as the job is done now, it is a pretty miserable flop.

Adolescents of high school age and older youth should be given a job first and educated in conjunction with work so the subject matter is immediately relevant.

If you would motivate a person to learn, particularly one of the impoverished, depressed, abused, apathetic poor, then give him the job first. Establish performance requirements, then set aside two hours of the working day for training to increase the worker's proficiency. Help him understand that he can increase his wage level by meeting production standards and that learning to read the job manual will help him do that faster. Then is the time to teach literacy.

Establish industrial councils for each job classification. Not vocational advisory boards which file reports once or twice a year, but actual trades councils composed of people who own and work in shops which will hire and train the students; then there will be concentration and productivity in vocational education.

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So, this model suggests that we must:

1. Change the attitude of the teachers of slum children;
2. Ungrade the elementary schools and mix the ages of the children;
3. Change the method of operation of the specialists on staff;
4. Establish a true supervisory system in education;
5. Provide part-time jobs for junior and senior high students, and;
6. Restructure the system of vocational education.

The revolution of the poor is not going to stop short. There is going to be and should be a long history of abrasiveness, of irritation, of hostility

yet to come; not a molly-coddling assumption that peace is necessary. For the excitement range of the representatives of the poor is an illustration, a symptom of the ferment of the family structure that says, "I want more for my child; I want my child to learn."

It is hard to take when it shows itself on the political and controversial levels, but it is one of the healthiest symptoms of the revolution taking place in the city slums of the United States.